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EXAMINER

SODERQUIST, ARLEN

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1743

DATE MAILED: 01/17/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

**Application No.**

10/623,355

**Applicant(s)**

MIZZER ET AL.

**Examiner**

Arlen Soderquist

**Art Unit**

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– The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address –  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 September 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 18 July 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                        | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)                     |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)    | Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____  |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____  | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                                    |

1. Figure 2 should be designated by a legend such as --Prior Art-- because only that which is old is illustrated. See MPEP § 608.02(g). Corrected drawings in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance. Figure 2 is an enlargement of a portion of figure 1 which is prior art.

2. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

3. Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. Examiner has been looking at the example given and determined that either there are additional changes that applicant has either not disclosed or the data in at least tables 2 and 3 are incorrect. Looking at the information of paragraph [0028] it is clear that for each operation (cuvette rotation and dwell time) 3.6 seconds are required. This leads to a maximum of 1000 operations/reagent additions per hour. It is noted that the application does not teach how to increase this number. It is not clear how a second or third reagent is added when more than one reagent is required to perform an assay. Possibilities include the cuvettes being prevented from rotating so that the second and/or third reagents are added before the cuvettes are rotated or the second and third reagents are added after the cuvette has made at least one complete rotation. It appears that for the example applicant only considered situations in which all of the analyses being concurrently performed on the analyzer required the same number of reagent additions and a single rotation of the cuvette to complete the assay after the addition of all the required reagents. In this instance, examiner can see how the throughput data of table 1 was obtained. Table 2 is after the addition of a second reagent storage area and a second reagent addition and dispense arm. The paragraph bridging

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pages 10-11 does not indicate that any additional changes were made to the instrument. In this case, 3.6 seconds are required for each operation and the maximum number of assays per hour is still 1000. Thus the throughput for a single reagent required is still 1000 since it does not matter which of the aspirate and dispense arms adds the single reagent. Thus the throughput is only increased by addition of the second reagent storage area and the second reagent addition and dispense arm when assays requiring two or three reagents are being performed. From this it is clear that the throughput data for a single required reagent in table 2 is not correct. The only change described in the paragraph bridging pages 11-12 is the addition of a third reagent storage area and a third reagent addition and dispense arm. As noted above, without additional changes to the instrument, 3.6 seconds are required for each operation and the maximum number of assays per hour is still 1000. Thus the throughput for assays requiring one or two reagents is only 1000 since it does not matter which of the aspirate and dispense arms adds the reagent(s). Thus the throughput is only increased by addition of the third reagent storage area and the third reagent addition and dispense arm when assays requiring three reagents are being performed. From this explanation it is clear that the throughput data for one or two required reagents in table 3 are not correct. Essentially what the example shows is that if the assays being run require more than one reagent to be added, the throughput for these assays can be increased or the analyzer can continue to run at its maximum rate for a single required reagent by adding one or more modules that provides the capability of adding multiple reagents at the same time. The application fails to teach how to increase the capacity to reach a throughput of more than 1000 assays/hour by adding reagent resources in an incremental manner. The disclosure also does not teach if those added reagent resources are limited to a single reagent, a set of reagents different from those initially present, a duplication of those originally present or some combination. Because of this, the claims will be treated for examination purposes as covering the addition of incremental capacity as demand increases (to perform new assays or the addition of capacity to add multiple reagents simultaneously).

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

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(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Jones (US 3,615,239). In the patent Jones teaches an automated analyzer and its programmer. The analyzer has three parts, a transporter unit (A), a delivery unit or system (B) and the programming means(C). Column 2, lines 12-19 teach that the programming means is constructed in modular form, each module being representative of a single test or operation to be performed by the analyzer. Therefore, where the number of diagnostic tests to be performed by the analyzer is to be increased at some later date after installation of such a unit, it is a relatively **simple matter to add a further module for programming the analyzer to perform the additional test**. Column 4, lines 6-19 teach that a wide variety of tests may be performed, in general such tests require **the addition of one or more reagents to the sample**, a mixing of the reagents and the sample fluid, a period of incubation during which the test reaction may occur, and a final photometric analysis of the reaction mixture. In the apparatus disclosed, five treatment stations (26-30) are indicated *although a greater or smaller number may be provided depending on the number and type of different diagnostic tests to be performed*. At each of these stations, a predetermined quantity of a test reagent may be introduced into selected sample tubes from a suitable source of supply, one such source being indicated schematically at 31. Column 4 also describes the structure to add reagents at each station. In discussion the programming means, the first two paragraphs of column 7 further emphasize that the number of control modules and also the number of deliver stations depend on the size of the analyzer and the number of different treatment procedures to be performed.

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

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1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
  2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
  3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
  4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.
7. Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Berglund (US 4,459,265) or Minekane (US 4,906,433) in view of Jones as described above.

In the patent Berglund teaches an analysis apparatus in which one or, preferably, a plurality of reagent dispensing stations (R1-R3) are placed around a conveyor means. Column 2 lines 21-28 teach that the objective is to provide an apparatus that is relatively inexpensive, is of simple construction, requires a relatively small space and can be programmed to carry out a large number of different analyses on a larger number of samples which are supplied to the apparatus simultaneously. From the first full paragraph of column 3, the one or preferably a plurality of reagent-supply stations, capable of selectively supplying a plurality of different reagent liquids to the reaction tube advanced by the stepwise drivable conveyor or rotatable turntable, can supply each separate sample a large number of different reagent liquids and combinations thereof, thereby enabling the apparatus to carry out a large number of different analyses, by programming the reagent-supply stations to select a reagent liquid in dependence upon the desired analysis. Since each reagent-supply station only requires a single metering pump, the apparatus is of relatively simple construction and inexpensive, despite the large number of different analyses which can be carried out. The last paragraph of column 10 teaches that the apparatus can be modified and designed in a number of different ways, to suit the intended purpose. For example, the number of different reagent-supply stations, their mutual positions, and their positions relative to the positions of the sample-supply stations can be varied. Additionally, the number of possible reagent liquids in each reagent-supply station and the number of tubes on the turntable capable of being supplied by the reagent-supply station may be varied. Berglund does not teach modular configuration for the additional reagent-supply stations.

In the patent, figure 1 is a conventional automatic analyzer having a single reagent supply position. The first two full paragraphs of column 2 teach that due to the increasing amount and types of analyses being performed the number of reagents required is causing the reagent storage space to become expansive and the speed of the analyzer to become slowed by the time required

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to bring the reagent into a position that it can be withdrawn. The next paragraph teaches that the object is to allow the analyzer to perform high speed analysis regardless of the number of items to be analyzed and the quantities of reagent required for the analysis. This is accomplished by providing a plurality of reagent storage locations and reagent distribution means as shown in figures 2 and 4. The last full paragraph of column 7 before the claims teaches that various modifications can be made to include the number and position of the reagent vessel storage locations. Minekane does not teach a modular configuration for the additional reagent storage and supply locations.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use a modular configuration as taught by Jones for the additional reagent-supply stations or Berglund or the additional reagent storage and supply locations of Minekane because as shown by Jones the modular configuration facilitates the variation of reagents as needed by the number and type of analyses to be performed and the teaching by both Berglund and Minekane that the respective reagent supply means can vary in number and configuration.

8. Applicant's arguments filed September 15, 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. In response to the arguments examiner notes that the reason for an increase in demand is not defined by the claims. Thus, provision of new reagents has not been excluded. Also, the form of the incremental addition has not been defined by the claims and addition of a single reagent is within the claim scope. As explained above the example given has problems in either some of the changes made to increase throughput have not been disclosed or the tables do not properly reflect the conditions and in some instances throughput is not increased even though the table points to an increase. These are relevant to the anticipation by the Jones reference since the claims are not commensurate in scope with the arguments. Additionally as explained above, there are situations in which the addition of reagent resources also fails to increase the throughput of the example given. In the same way addition of additional reagent resources in Jones allows the analyzer to continue to operate at the maximum throughput in spite of the different reagent needs for the assays being performed. In this way the teachings of Jones are equivalent to the example of the specification and therefore anticipate the claims. Relative to the obviousness rejections, the same response is applicable since the claims fail to define reasons for

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the increased demand, specific forms of the additional incremental capacity or the specific configuration of the analyzer.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Arlen Soderquist whose telephone number is (571) 272-1265. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday and Alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill Warden can be reached on (571) 272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arlen Soderquist', written in a cursive style.

Arlen Soderquist  
Primary Examiner



A circular black and white stamp. The text "OIPÉ" is at the top, "PATENT &amp; TRADEMARK OFFICE" is at the bottom, and "SEP 15 2005" is in the center. "LAP 78" is written in the upper right quadrant.

**Fig. 1 PRIOR ART**